Business on the Move: Near Island Coffee

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

It’s time now for the first installment of KMXT’s five-part series: Business on the Move. Each day this week KMXT will feature a local business that is changing things up in 2013.

The New Year is often considered a time for new beginnings, and so is the case with today’s business. A short drive across the Fred Zharoff Memorial Bridge will take you past a recently opened drive-through café, the first and only coffee shop on Near Island. Near Island Coffee is the brainchild of Jasmine Gilpin, who now manages the stand. Gilpin moved to Kodiak five months ago, and after struggling to find a job decided to make her own employment opportunities. She said she saw the vacant lots on Near Island, one that already housed a small building, and thought a coffee shop might be a needed amenity.

-- (Near Coffee 1 :11 “I found out that Shuyak … loved it and hired me.”)

After the OK from Shuyak Incorporated, Gilpin said she worked feverishly over the holidays to make sure the shop would be ready to open in the New Year. Shuyak owns the land and building, but Gilpin manages everything else, a noble task for a 20-year-old, full-time student. Despite the work load, Gilpin said she loves the opportunity to manage her own shop.

-- (Near Coffee 2 :15 “Oh ya, I love managing ... understanding, I love it.”)

The shop was open a mere 10 days when it was hit by a break-in last week, but Gilpin didn’t let the incident rattle her or her business. The day after she had security cameras installed, and opened up for business as if nothing had happened. She said she has every intent to stick around for a long time, and

even hinted at future expansion.

-- (Near Coffee 3 :13 “Yeah, we’ve talked … has a drive-through on it.”)

For now, Gilpin said she just wants to focus on bringing quality, affordable coffee to Kodiak community members. She said her prices are fairly comparable to other coffee shops around town, but she strives for daily specials and incentives to bring folks across the bridge.

-- (Near Coffee 4 :27 “Well from 3 to 9 a.m. any … employees picks out.”)

Including Gilpin, the shop is staffed by six employees, with only two being full time. She said she plans to hire more help in the coming weeks and expand her hours accordingly. For now, the shop is open Monday through Saturday from 6 a.m. until 5 p.m., and on Sundays from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. Gilpin said she is currently serving Caffe d’Arte coffee, but plans to switch over to Kaladi Brothers very soon.

Tune in to KMXT tomorrow for part two of the series, Business on the Move. KMXT will take you across town to another coffee shop, Mill Bay Coffee. Join us as we talk with the owners about the shop’s recent move and what to expect from the two-decade old business in 2013.

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